

Copyright, 1913, by the Star Company. Great Britain Rights Reserved.

WHY CRIME DOES NOT PAY

The Burglar Who Robs Your Home---

By SOPHIE LYONS

The Most Famous and Successful Criminal of Modern Times, Who Made a Million Dollars in Her Early Criminal Career and Lost It at Monte Carlo, and Has Now Accumulated Half a Million Dollars in Honorable Business Enterprises.



Sophie Lyons.

Copyright, 1913, by the Star Company. Great Britain Rights Reserved.

VERY often a burglar finds among his loot a lot of articles of little or no intrinsic value, but worth possibly thousands of dollars to their owner. Such articles, if disposed of in the regular way to a "fence" or professional receiver of stolen property would often net but small returns, whereas the same articles if "worked back" to the owners through tactful negotiation might bring thousands of dollars.

Because of my ability in "working back" articles in this manner my services were frequently enlisted by professional house-breakers in years gone by. In this way I came to know many of the most notorious of them quite intimately. Then, too, I was "in" on several jobs myself. If burglary presented an exception to the general rule that "crime does not pay," I think, therefore, that I would be in as good a position as any one to testify to it.

As a matter of fact, throughout all my experience in the underworld the conclusion was continually being forced upon me that a life of crime cannot pay and that the house-breaker, however successful he may prove for a while, is bound to lose out in the end.

The truth of the matter is that the house-breaker, like every other professional criminal, is an inveterate gambler. When he is in funds he squanders his money, and then when times are bad and one "job" after another seems to go wrong, he has nothing to fall back on. For weeks at a time even the most "successful" burglars have found it hard work to secure three meals a day. During such periods they lead the existence of outcasts.

Even when the burglar is not harassed by actual want, there are many other things to worry him. The fear of arrest is constantly in his mind. He is a hunted man. It is a fact that some burglars are occasionally stricken with remorse for some of their heartless deeds. One of the cases I speak of to-day presents an instance of this. Then, too, the burglar is constantly jeopardizing his life and liberty in pursuing his dangerous vocation. The householder has no hesitancy in shooting to kill when he comes upon an intruder, and the burglar carries his life in his hands.

Even with money in his pocket, therefore, the professional house-breaker is constantly asking himself the question, "Does it pay?" Is the game worth the candle? and from what I know of the game I feel warranted in saying that in nine cases out of ten the answer is in the negative. CRIME DOES NOT PAY.

It is a fact that the horror experienced by a householder upon discovering an intruder in his room is far less than the tax upon the nerves of the burglar himself. From the moment the house-breaker makes his entry he is under the most intense strain. The shock he experiences when he is discovered is enough to make even the bravest quail. At the slightest suspicious sound he is ready to turn tail and run. It is only when he finds himself cornered that he puts up a fight. Then he is backed by the courage of desperation, and escape is the only thing he thinks of.

No burglar ever encountered a greater surprise than that which met "Pete" Kelley, the notorious second-story man, some years ago. I was not "in" on the job in the first place, but Kelley got me to "work back" some of the loot, and that is how I came to hear his own story of his remarkable experience.

This Kelley was a very clever second-story man. Some house-breakers obtain an entrance by way of the front or back door. Others climb up the porch and get in by way of the second-story windows. These are known as the second-story men, and Kelley was one of the best of them.

The particular job to which I referred took place in Kansas City. Kelley "took in" a theatre one night, and there he saw the wife of a wealthy man of the town. Her display of jewels dazzled him. He made up his mind to get them if it were possible.

He followed the couple home and spent the following three days studying the habits of the inmates of the house.

Every time the husband or the wife left the house he or one of his pals trailed him or her. As a result of this espionage Kelley satisfied himself that the family possessed no safe deposit vault or, if they did, that the jewels which the lady had worn at the theatre, at any rate, had not been deposited in their safe-deposit box, because neither of them had visited the vault.

From all he could gather the household consisted of the husband and wife and three servants. Kelley had ascertained that their usual hour for dining was seven o'clock. Quite frequently they had company for the evening meal and the dinner was seldom over before eight, giving an energetic second-story man a full hour to work unintercepted.

Kelley bided his time. On the fourth day of watching he decided his opportunity had arrived. He had watched the house from early morning, being relieved at times by a pal in whom he had the utmost confidence.

At seven o'clock the mental picture

Kelley had of the interior of that household was a dining room in which the master and mistress of the house and their three guests, who had entered at different times during the afternoon and had not departed, were seated around a well-laden dinner table, a kitchen in which the servants were dividing their attention between serving the family meal and eating their own, and an entirely unoccupied upper part of the house completely at his mercy.

It was late November and quite dark. With the agility of a cat Kelley climbed up the front of the house and made a speedy entrance through one of the second-story windows. Although he was on the alert every second of the time Kelley felt absolutely secure. Downstairs he could hear the rattle of the dinner things and the conversation of the company, but the silence of the tomb reigned in the upper floors. He could almost hear his own footsteps, although his feet were clad in slippers of lamb's wool.

Kelley quickly found his way to the wife's bedroom. He ransacked the bureau and dressing tables, picking up a few trinkets here and there, but the loot he was principally interested in was nowhere to be found.

There was a small room immediately adjoining this bedroom. Kelley decided to explore it.

He opened the door slowly to guard against possible squeaking. The door yielded easily. As he entered the room he observed that it was fitted as a bedroom. It was dusk and the lights had not been turned on. Kelley flashed his lamp around the room and as the beam of light swept across the bed he discerned in it the startled features of a woman!

Her glazed eyes were staring straight at him, her countenance horribly contorted through fear. A chill went through Kelley's heart. In a moment he regained his courage. Carefully closing the door and locking it, he advanced toward the bed and in a low, kindly voice exclaimed: "Madam, if you make the slightest noise I will kill you. Keep still and I will not harm you."

The woman was absolutely paralyzed with fear. It was evident that she was a chronic invalid. Perhaps she had occupied that bed for many months. Kelley's observation of the house had given him not the slightest inkling of her presence.

He realized that the woman was now suffering from terrific shock, and as long as she remained in that condition he was in no danger, but at any moment the reaction might come and then, despite his threats, she would scream! It was necessary for him to work quickly and make a quick getaway.

Kelley did not draw his gun. The woman needed no such menace to keep her in check. A hasty search of the room revealed a wall safe. Kelley asked the invalid for the combination. She was too frightened to answer. The burglar decided to open the safe with his tools. He was engaged in finding the proper implement when he heard ascending footsteps.

Assuming that it was a servant bringing the invalid's supper, Kelley turned to the sick woman. "If anybody raps on your door," he commanded threateningly, "tell them to go away and not to come back for half an hour. You don't want to be disturbed. Do you understand?"

The woman answered feebly in the affirmative.

The steps were nearing the door. Kelley stood with pistol cocked aimed at the head of the person who would appear at the door if the door opened.

It was a moment of great tension. There came the tap on the door. Kelley moved not a muscle. The sick woman cleared her throat and then in a weak tremulous voice repeated the words Kelley had commanded her to say. Kelley pocketed his pistol as he heard the steps retreating.

Then, feeling that the woman in bed was now in a position to talk coherently, he advanced toward her and exhibiting his powerful arms, threatened to choke her to death unless she gave him the combination of the safe. He figured that the frightened voice of the woman might have aroused the suspicions of the servant who had been dismissed and that it was more necessary than ever to make a quick getaway.

The invalid gave him the desired key and Kelley got quickly to work.

The jewelry the woman had worn at the theatre and a lot of other valuable

pieces, besides some negotiable bonds, rewarded Kelley's prowess. Carrying the jewelry over to the bed the burglar asked the ailing woman whether there was any particular piece she desired. She selected several and Kelley let her keep them. Kelley slammed the door of the safe, pocketed his booty and made his escape by way of the window.

Then the woman collapsed. When the servant reappeared with her supper some half an hour later the sick woman was raving.

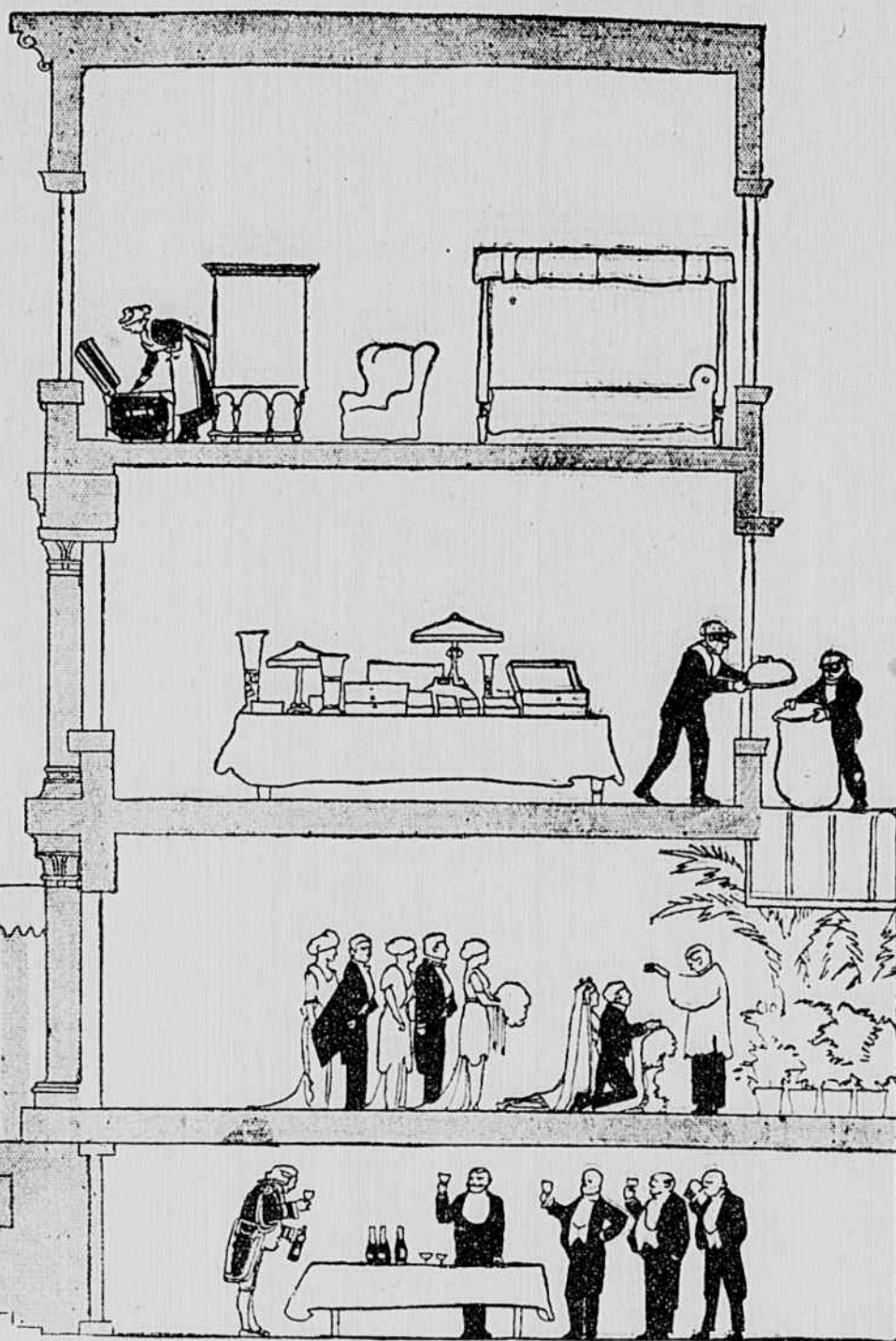
In vain she tried to convince the people of the house, who were summoned, that there had been a burglar in her room who had stolen the family treasures, but they glanced at the closed safe door and concluded that the woman was delirious. It was four hours later, when the family retired and the mistress of the house went to the safe to deposit the jewelry she had been wearing, that the invalid's story was confirmed.

I worked the jewelry back and also the bonds some months later. In the course of the negotiations I learned that the invalid never recovered from the shock she had sustained and died a couple of months later. But the shock which Kelley himself had sustained when he discovered the woman in what he thoroughly believed was an unoccupied room so unnerved him that it was months before he had courage

stairs," he said, "you might as well have yours here." Under the influence of the wine the detective soon proved more tractable and the waiter had no difficulty in getting him to leave the room for a moment or two on some simple pretext.

That short period of time was sufficient to enable two of our gang both able second-story men to make their way into the room, cut out the glass of one of the cases and seize every piece of jewelry available. In a moment they were gone.

The detective was still in the corridor talking to the waiter, when one of the



"While the detectives were making merry over their champagne in the basement, two able second-story men made their way to the room on the second floor where the wedding presents were displayed in several large glass cases. It was the work of only a few minutes to open the cases and fill a bag with valuable pieces of jewelry and solid gold and silverware."

case. She screamed and fainted.

The detective at once ran in to the room and saw at a glance what had happened. He ran downstairs in despair yelling for the other detectives, and when they got upstairs the sight of the empty case frightened them so much that they were sobered instantly.

In the meantime the waiter, who had drawn the detective away, fled. When the detectives began to put two and two together in the way they usually do they came to the conclusion that the big jewelry robbery which had been pulled off right under their noses had been the work of an ignorant waiter.

As I have said, I was in on this job. The four of us took the boat the next day for Europe.

Two days after we were out at sea, one of my pals made the remarkable discovery that among our fellow-passengers were the bride and groom we had robbed! Indeed, their stateroom was immediately adjoining our own quarters.

When the waiter crook realized that our victims were on board he was for trying

to "work back" some of the stuff at once. Such a proposition appeared extremely dangerous to me, and I had all I could do to persuade him to make no such attempt.

When we got to London we spent a week in our rooms at the hotel taking the stones out of their settings to make it impossible to identify them. We melted up the gold pieces, and after we had everything in shape, we went out and sold the stuff. We realized a hundred thousand dollars. My three pals went off with their money and returned to me in London some three weeks later absolutely broke. They had gambled and lost every cent of their fortune. I let them have a little money and hurried back home. I didn't want my share of the loot to follow that of these fools who couldn't hold a cent.

A "second-story man" known as "Doc"

Ryan was responsible for my taking up this class of work. He was an expert at it and convinced me that I was wasting my time in other forms of crime.

We went to Indianapolis, and there we had an experience which made me regret my decision to join forces with this daring criminal.

"Doc" had made a successful entrance into a large mansion and was tossing seal-skin coats out of the window to me. Jewels and other small articles of value he put into a cloth bag which he carried, but the big things he threw out to me and I industriously packed them into suitcases.

Suddenly "Doc" was discovered. Shots were fired at him and it was only by the merest luck that he managed to get away with his life. We fled in different directions, I abandoning a large part of the loot I had collected.

Later in the evening when I met "Doc" and asked him where my share of the stolen jewelry was, he said, he had buried it in an old barn. I insisted upon going with him that very night and digging it up, as I was anxious to see just how much the evening's exciting adventure was going to net us. To my disgust I found that the jewelry, which we had obtained at so much risk, was not worth five hundred dollars, and disposed of in the way we would have to get rid of it would net us much less. I then decided that there was too much risk and too little profit in this line of work and, except in one or two rare instances where big returns were definitely assured, I kept away from it ever afterward.

Some years afterward I met "Doc" Ryan on the Pacific Coast. He had kept to second-story work and had made many rich hauls. Twice he had been shot by the householders he was robbing and he had served several prison terms.

When I met him he was old and feeble and was peddling tooth paste in the streets. This man, who had cleaned up many fortunes in his time, had to support himself in his old age by begging in the streets!

"My life of crime has brought me nothing but sorrow," he complained. "In prison and out of it my experiences have convinced me that honesty is the best policy after all. It is better to be an honest beggar than a wealthy crook!"

And I know "Doc" Ryan was right.

SOPHIE LYONS.



"The burglar flashed his dark lantern around the room and as its rays swept across the bed he beheld in it a woman's pallid face. Her glazed eyes were staring straight at him, her features were horribly contorted—she was all but paralyzed with fear."

to resume his criminal vocation, and he was constantly stricken with remorse ever after when he realized that the "job" had cost the invalid's life. In a fit of melancholia, two years later, he shot himself.

One of the biggest house robberies in which I ever figured took place a good many years ago in the mansion of a New York millionaire. It was during the wedding ceremony of his daughter, and the loot consisted of a large portion of the wedding presents. It was a very profitable job.

The marriage ceremony was performed on the first floor and was attended by prominent people from all over the world. On the second floor the wedding presents were displayed. There was over a million dollars' worth of them. Valuable pieces of jewelry were placed in glass cases which were constantly under the eye of detectives. The place looked like a jeweller's shop.

While the wedding ceremony was going on, one of the waiters suggested to the detective on guard on the second floor that if he wanted to join the other detectives and house attendants who were celebrating on their own account down below, he, the waiter, would watch the jewelry till the detective got back. The detective declined to avail himself of the waiter's offer but proved less circumspect when the waiter appeared a few moments later with a bottle of champagne.

"If you won't join the rest of us down-

servant girls happened to walk into the gift-room to do a little picking up of flowers and other things that might be lying around. Suddenly she saw the empty

What the Stars Predict for July

THE month of July will be ruled by Mars nearing the horizon with the luminaries in favorable aspect and Jupiter benignantly in the zenith. This foreshadows a warlike spirit among the laboring classes, with a strong probability of riots and bloodshed.

The coming month will, on the other hand, be generally favorable for all rulers. Several acts of President Wilson and Governors of Eastern States will meet with strong popular approval. Foreign affairs will, however, give the national administration good cause for worry, owing to the depressive influence of Saturn in our ruling sign, of which Japan is fully aware and of which she will be quick to take advantage.

Here are some of the things which will make July an eventful month:

July 23—Excitement in the financial world, with heavy unloading of securities; a marine calamity will be reported.

July 5—The stock market in a reactionary condition; failure of an important business house; severe earthquakes.

July 7-9—A very favorable period; look for rising values in the Stock Market; in Washington appropriations for national defence will be made and an important foreign treaty facilitated, a labor problem in the public eye.

July 11-14—A change to cooler temperature; an important social function and the announcement of a marriage engagement will interest the smart set; stocks continue to advance.

July 18-19—Destructive rains in the Southwest and along the coast; a fall in stocks, due to disturbing Government reports and the bursting of a huge financial bubble; coroners will be busy at this period with many odd cases.

July 20-22—With these dates July enters upon a tempestuous period. A great social scandal, death of a woman prominent in the theatrical world, and surprising revelations concerning prisons and other public institutions are promised.

July 27-28—A great fire disaster, probably in a school or amusement building; the Cabinet worried by a strained diplomatic situation and Congress in a belligerent mood; loss of life in a railway accident and heavy damage to property by electric storms.

Owing to the good offices of Jupiter, July is a very favorable month for those born in the first week of January, March, May, September or November of any year. Such persons may pursue their undertakings with confidence of success. They will be particularly benefited by new friendships. Unmarried women born in the first week of January, May or September may expect offers of marriage.

July will be an unlucky month for those born in the first week of June or December, on account of the frowning influence of Saturn. They should be slow about undertaking important affairs, particularly if interested in real estate, or if they have business relations with aged people.

Business complications are in store for those born January 26-27, April 26-27, July 29-30, October 29-30.

July will be marked by sharp annoyances, if you were born in May of any year. Be careful not to take cold, for the transit of Mars over our Sun threatens throat trouble.

If you were born in the first three weeks of June you may expect to receive presents and pleasant offers during July.